***FANTASIES***

***OF***

***THE***

***TEENAGE***

***CHILD***

***A book dedicated to the teenage life and experiences often witnessed by young teenage minds.***

***Dedication.***  
This book is dedicated to all the teenagers around the globe. It was such a great time writing this book, having in mind that those who will eventually read it are young people who are in the development and discovery stage of their lives. The content of this book will be greatly beneficial to anyone who deems it necessary to get, read and practicalize the lessons this book has to offer. One good thing about this book is that it explicitly explains the concepts of friendship which teenagers may be confusing for some other non-friendship related concepts. It promises to be a great read, so, every teenager should endeavor to get and read this book.

*Chapter Organization*

*This book has been written in chapter format that beautifully captures the original, heartfelt content of the author so as to ensure easy readability and understanding. The chapters within this book are as follows:*

*. Friendship*

*. Crush*

*. Infatuation*

*. Love*

*. Relationship*

*. Breakups*

*. General counseling*

**Chapter 1**

***Friendship***

What is friendship?? Why must I have friends?? Am I not better off alone??

These are some of the questions that run through the minds of several teenagers out there, in a bid to find out what the whole concept of “*friendship*” really entails. As teens, we all get to that point in our lives where we need people around us for so many reasons; studying together, sharing ideas, playing, hanging out and stuffs. In a very simple description,” friendship is a platonic attachment between/among people”. For some, it’s just having people to hang around with while for others, it goes beyond just hanging around. They begin to develop some deep feelings of trust and accountability towards someone, often known as “*best friend*”. They let down their guard around their best friend and become more vulnerable to them, believing that their secrets won’t ever get out in the open. Being attached to someone is not a bad thing in itself, but what really needs to be looked at closely is the “motive” behind such attachment.

Some people become friends with others because of material things, often referred to as “*friends with* *benefits* “. This type of friendship is not bad in itself, but the issue being that some people become “*liabilities*” to others due to over-dependency. Over time, the second party to this type of friendship becomes overwhelmed by the excessive demand pattern of the other person. To add to this, if it happens to be between a guy and a girl, things might get messy as the guy, in most cases, tend to exchange/do things for the girl, expecting her to reciprocate the gesture(S) with her body--quite ridiculous!!

Some other people tend to make friends with others just to *belong* to ‘a group’, often referred to as *“clique”.* This type of friendship harbors a lot of “fake” friends, who live their lives to impress others, prove a point to people and create the impression of who they’re really not. Just as said earlier, the motive behind this friendship is usually “low self-esteem”. People are different, and so are their backgrounds. Those from the upper class tend to live extravagant life; mansions, fleet of cars, private jets and booming businesses. This kind of lifestyle isn’t bad at all, provided the source of income is from a legitimate means. Those from the lower class tend to live the “low key” kind of life; poor living standard, little or no formal education and in some cases, it’s abject poverty. Looking at the aforementioned kinds of people, it’s quite clear that they have almost nothing in common. Now imagine when the latter tries to live like the former--a lot begins to happen; robbery, kidnapping, internet scamming, prostitution and so many other social vices (because some people fail to understand the concept of “*class*”).

Some other people make friends with others because they want to become better, at the same time, making positive impacts on the lives of their friends as well. This is more like a term used in Biology, “*commensalism*”. In this type of friendship, both parties benefit mutually. People in this type of friendship often end up being responsible individuals to themselves and the society at large. They go on being friends for years; some do get married and still have their friends from way back still intact. They always have one another’s back and this is what true friendship really means. The people in this category of friendship have a lot to gain as; they have friends who know their weaknesses but never judge them, those who know their strength and encourage them, those who fight for them even in their absence and those who never leave when hard times come around. This type of friendship never really ends, no matter the time and distance.

It should be respected that people are different, and so are their perspectives. People sometimes go into friendship without knowing why and this can lead to devastating outcomes if they don’t realize the situation on time. Just as the popular saying goes, “The truth is always bitter”, it may sound harsh but the honest truth is that not everyone will like or want to be friends with you. At times, those who smile at you the most are the people should be most afraid of. This is the more reason why a lot of teens go astray; “wrong

association”. There’s another popular saying that goes thus,” Evil communication corrupts good manners”—this hugely applies to teens in the sense that, once the communication pattern gets affected, every other aspect follow suit. They mingle with “toxic people” they call friends. They’re then exposed to harmful things/habits that have adverse effects on mental, social, emotional and even spiritual health. Things like *pornography, hard drugs, alcohol, gangsterism, etc*. It’s very important to have a purpose in mind before embarking on anything, including friendship.

It is important to choose our friends wisely as bad associations can have adverse effects on our moral and social lives. It is not uncommon to see people getting influenced negatively by those they call friends simply because they yield to the suppressive dispositions radiated by their friends. They get “pressurized “ to do things they wouldn’t have done willingly; joining a burglary gang, becoming members of cult groups, prostitutions and internet scamming. In some cases, they may have the opportunity to pull out of such “toxic” friendships but stay back so as to make their “friends” and still remain “accepted”. People who usually fall victims to this toxic kind of friendship are those with “low self-esteem” and “greed issues”. Low self-esteem in the sense that they feel the need to depend on their friends for survival, as well as getting their opinions to feel validated and accepted. Greed in the sense that they have such a strong desire to “acquire and amass” wealth, resources, recognition and fame at all cost. This “predator-prey” kind of friendship is such that the “predators” capitalize on the weaknesses of the “preys” and use them to their very advantage. They seem to be the best of friends anyone would love to have but deep down, they’re actually monsters waiting for the next victim to tear apart. This kind of friends should really be watched out for---their negative impacts leave a lifelong scar of devastation and destruction.

In the final analysis, friendship is a great form of association, beneficial to those who venture into it with a purpose in mind. Therefore, it must be noted that friendship is some do or die affair; if it’s not working out, try to fix but if it shows no sign of recovery, you’ve to consider leaving it for good. Any healthy friendship should add value to you, not degrading your worth. Friendship entails respect, trust, communication, sharing and commitment of some sort; if you find yourself in a situation where you give all of these to preserve a friendship and nothing is being done by the next person, you’ve got to call it quits. Surround yourself with people who think in the same line as you do and work harmoniously towards achieving set goals. Friendship is great, but build it with those who will contribute equally to ensure its longevity

**Chapter 2**

***Crush***

*Boy: Hmm...that girl is really gorgeous, I wish I could tell her what I feel for her.*

*Girl: OMG!!! He is so cute, I’m falling for him already.*

The sayings above aren’t new in the teenage world, even though acknowledging them publicly may be so daunting a task to do. In this phase of a teen’s life, there are a lot of things going on, both in the heart and head. There’s that “one person” that causes you to develop “goose bumps” anytime he/she is around you. You suddenly begin to act weird and struggle with the things you could do with so much ease before. No need to be scared of the way you feel or act towards the person, you simply have a “crush” on him/her.

So, you may be wondering, what is “crush” to start with???? To have a crush on someone means to express a strong affection in a light-hearted and slightly juvenile way to that person. Of course, you don’t want to give the impression that you’re “a desperado”, so you take things really slow. You begin to act nicer and more responsible anytime your crush is around. Do not get it twisted, some people usually miss it at this point either by pretending or overdoing things. There’s nothing wrong in being nice to someone but excess of it sucks, especially when it involves someone you’ve got feelings for.

At this time, a lot of questions start popping up; ‘should I tell her/him?’, ‘what will be her/his reaction?’, ‘how would he/she see me after this moment?’, and the most fearsome of all, ‘will I be accepted or rejected?’. This is more daunting for the guys as they’ll have to make the first move; “approaching the girl”. It all starts when he meets and talks to the girl, which is a big determinant of whether anything will work out or not.

Talking to the girl is a product of amassed courage, but a lot still happens even during the course of the “first conversation”. They may both show some signs of ‘shyness, caressing of hair, no-eye-contact practice, some moments of silence 🤫 which can be so awkward, though nobody’s fault and fidgeting as well’. It is pretty normal to feel this way when you’re around someone you have feelings for. If well received, the resulting feeling is one of the best feelings in the entire world. Personally, I feel it’s great to have a crush on someone. It takes you out of your “comfort zone” and make you trust your guts for once in your life 😂.

What are the signs that you’re crushing on someone???

You’re constantly thinking about him/her.

You get overly excited anytime he/she is around.

You may ask random questions just to have a conversation with him/her.

You read deeply into what he/she says to you.

You may forget every other thing, but remember in details every moment spent with him/her

You pay close attention to him/her…the outfits, kinds of sports loved, interests.

You may forget every other thing, but you’ll remember every moment spent with her in full details.

You just discover you smile more often whenever they’re around.

It feels great to have a crush on someone and even greater when you’re someone’s crush. It’s a feeling that every teenager must have felt at some point in the teenage life. But in all of these, it’s important to remember that not everything lasts forever…O yes. “A typical crushing period lasts only about four (4) months, according to psychologists”. It’s important to note this because some people go on pushing what can never actualize and come out heartbroken 💔 in the end. AS much as we crush, we should also remember to use our heads too; to move on when it’s the best option available. It really doesn’t add up to live your life trying to impress someone who cannot consider you for even a second.

**Chapter 3**

***Infatuation***

This is the phase where the “rush” feelings begin to overly intensify kind of. As always known, people are different and would react differently to the bubbling emotions on their inside at this phase. It’s important to note that one may think he/she is in love ❤, begins to show the affection strongly towards the other person, not realizing that it wasn’t “love” after all, but “infatuation”. Some do their best to “control” these emotions while others let themselves be “swallowed up”. What really needs to be looked at in this phase is how these growing feelings and emotions are managed. It is not a crime, at least not yet, to develop feelings for someone but how we express those feelings matter. Some people would sit back to do some “personal evaluation” on whether the feelings are actually what they seem to be but others may just conclude that it is love, which is not so ideal. As a teenager, I had this experience. I learnt my lesson the hard way, not because I wanted to but for the fact that I wasn’t well enlightened.

At the time, there was this classmate of mine whom I liked so much. I was the shy type and didn’t have that much courage to let her in on what I felt for her. As time went on, I started noticing I “obsessed” about her a lot; always thinking about her, trying to please her, trying to look perfect just to get her attention and stuffs. Not knowing much then, I just resolved that she must have felt the same way about me too---but I was WRONG!!!!!! . It dawned on me the day I summoned the courage to tell her that I liked her, I’m sure you know the answer by now. She told me “no” in her calm voice but still maintained we could be best of friends. Her words, I quote; “I’m sorry, but I don’t like you more than just a friend. The fact that we talk a lot doesn’t mean I have “that” feelings for you. I’m really sorry”, each time it comes across my mind, still feels like yesterday. This was someone I fantasized a lot about, only to be turned down in the end. I began to think aloud to myself; why didn’t she accept my offer? What went wrong? What did I do/didn’t do?

Thousands of questions ran through my mind within the shortest of time but I learnt a lesson; “My action should have been based on information/communication, not assumption”. Don’t it twisted, even if I had thought about my feelings thoroughly before telling, it won’t change what her response would be. A girl has the “right” to make the decision on whether to accept or decline a friendship request, it shouldn’t be imposed on her.

As teens, there’s that curiosity to explore, but when the answer isn’t forthcoming as quick as they want, they resort to assumption. The use of “assumption theory” in friendship, of any kind, may sometimes have a devastating effect. Teenagers love to explore, live their lives with “less interference” from the elderlies’ in the society not realizing that things are not always what they appear to be. The “wisdom” of the elderly members of the society is indispensable. Of course, they were once teenagers and have had lots of experience in friendship and relationships. As the popular saying goes; “Experience is the best teacher”, it doesn’t mean that everyone must make the same mistake as others, we can always learn from the mistakes of others so as not to get caught up in the same web during our time.

So, one may like to ask; is there a difference between infatuation and love??

The answer to this is YES!!!! Though the both of them involve strong feelings, love is more complex than the concept of infatuation. When one feels or acts as though in love without realizing that it is not love, that is ‘infatuation’. Love is more complex, in the sense that it entails ‘strong feelings, commitment, sacrifice, service, endurance, tolerance and so much more, all encapsulated in one concept’. Another difference between the two is continuity. Infatuation can only last as long as the “feelers” wallow through but love lasts for a much longer time. People in love may have misunderstandings, quarrels and fights but still find a common ground to make peace while those in infatuation can barely continue, and even when they do, it may just be a “one-sided affair” which sucks in all sense.

Where does this feeling come from?? Why can’t I get over it??

These are some of the questions some teenagers may have been asking, but no one to provide the answers. The fact is that, “the feelings come from inside of you”. It is more of a “natural phenomenon” ---you meet someone and after some time, you realize you’ve started having feelings for such a person.

For some, the feelings develop over time while for others, they start building up at the very first sight; usually tagged “love at first sight”. Our emotions are part of us, they constitute who we are. Sometimes, they’re the reasons we have a smile on our faces, other times, they’re the reason we just want to tear ourselves to shreds. Let’s face it, we don’t always have that full control over our feelings. At times, they get the best of us, other times, they get the worst of us. They are also bound to change/ fluctuate; usually tagged “mood swing”. One important thing to note is that “what you constantly think about, in most cases, becomes your reality”. The more you fantasize about someone, the more the feelings continue to grow. That is to say, you can’t really get over a feeling that takes a front row seat constantly in your mind easily. You need to “explore other thoughts, do new things, find new interests and do what makes you happy, instead of being caged in your own emotion. Developing feelings is a natural phenomenon, we can’t help it sometimes but we must endeavor to keep our emotions under control, as much as possible. It is good but make sure to work with your head and heart when it involves someone…. because sometimes, the head and the heart do not always agree on a thing, but they play a crucial role in the way we feel. Marry the both of them and you’ll glad you did the right thing in the end.

**Chapter 4**

***Love***

It’s one of the best feelings in the entire world; natural, strong, unexplainable…. The one feeling that makes the world go round, “love”. At some point in our lives, we develop this feeling for that special person whom we always want to spend every second of our time with. It is not exclusive to the adult members of the society alone; teenagers often find themselves in this “love web” too. It is just one of those human emotions but “the magnitude of its effect is fascinating”. Love is a feeling which can’t be totally described with the words of mouth alone. Actions taken when in love also go a long way in conveying our feelings to the other person adequately. Love encapsulates a whole lot of concepts; communication, commitment, trust, respect, sacrifice, service, faithfulness and so much more. Each of the aforementioned concepts play a very key role in preserving the love between/ among people**.**

**Concepts of love**

Just as said above, love without the other concepts is just a disaster in the making. Some things need the dependence on others to thrive; among such things is love. Therefore, it’s important to familiarize oneself with each of the concepts mentioned above. Communication---the act of exchanging information. It is very necessary that when we fall in love, we should endeavor to have daily communication with our partner. It doesn’t mean we must talk for hours, but checking up on one another shouldn’t be such a big deal. If love is built on communication, it’ll be easier to build trust as well. Having an open, heart-to-heart communication with our love buddies helps us become more comfortable around them. It is also important when there’s an issue to be resolved. It saves us the regret of doing things out of assumption which poses a threat to the love shared. Commitment—the act of being willing to truly accept your feelings and investing into the relationship so as to preserve it. This concept is crucial; some people get things wrong most times because they failed to commit to the relationship, in terms of time, attention, energy and so on. It is true that people have different priorities, but it’s also important to make out time for a relationship if it is cherished by those involved. Trust---having strong positive conviction towards someone, believing them for their own words and having a guaranteed assurance of fairness in them. This concept is very important when in love because you believe the words of your partner without having any doubts or having to do any form of cross checking of their words. Trust is earned, not bought. It is built over time and may not be recovered once lost. This is why sincerity and honesty go along with trust, they’re just inseparable. Respect---giving due recognition to the views/ opinions/ choices and decisions of people. It is necessary to note that being in love with someone doesn’t imply that you’ll always agree on a thing or see things from the same perspective all the time. Of course, misunderstandings may arise at some point but knowing when to “keep one’s cool” and accept the view of the other person may save the stress of unnecessary arguments and fights over mundane things.

**Types of love**

As teenagers, we may often want to know if “love” has several forms of manifestation or does it just happen only in one way. The truth is that love, just as it has several concepts, also has several forms of manifestation. Love may be a single feeling, but it plays out in several forms. As teens, we need to understand these different manifestations of love; as it’ll help us in understanding our relationships better. The various forms of love include: Agape Love (Unconditional love), Philia Love (Affectionate love), Eros love (Romantic love), Philautia love (Self-love), Storge love (Familiar love), Pragma love (Enduring love), Ludus love (Playful love) and Mania love (Obsessive love). The aforementioned types of love should help us teens to understand what we feel as “love” at every given time. One thing to note is that love is a natural phenomenon; it occurs on its own. Therefore, any love that is imposed is not love at all. Love is a

wonderful feeling but becomes sour when it is a one-sided affair; only one person bears the entire load on him/herself. Another great thing to note is that the opposite of love isn’t “hatred”, but “indifference “. It may be hard to believe but when two people are thought of to be in love whereas only one of them does all the work to keep things going, while the other person gives no damn whatsoever, that is pure indifference. The harsh truth is that this behavior is overwhelming and sucks!!!!!!

**Does being in love have any signs??**

O yes!!! When we’re in love with someone, some things begin to happen and change around us just to bring it to our notice that we’re in love. There a lot of signs but let’s get to know a few. When in love, we often notice that:

We think about who we love all the time

We go out of our way to do things for them, whether it’s convenient for us or not

We want to know everything about their life—childhood, family, favorite food and so on.

We smile each time we think about them

We talk about them incessantly

We follow up their social media accounts to see if they posted anything new.

We find everything they do fascinating.  
We feel like they really listen to us and respect our opinions.  
We include them in planning we do, every decision we make.  
  
It’s clear that love encompasses a whole lot of concepts, therefore, it must not be taken for joke. Some people have taken up several titles such as; “players”, “fuckboys”, “gold diggers”, “heart breakers” and some other nasty names. One common factor in all these personalities is “lack of purpose”. Some people fall in love blindly, without knowing where the relationship is headed. It is important to know when falling in love is right and when it’s just going to a “ride”. No one wants to be heartbroken as a result of loving someone and this is why we must endeavor to be purpose-driven when we fall in love, to avoid stories that touch the heart. Love is a wonderful feeling, it makes you see the positive side of a person/ thing when everything around you says you should call it quits, it gives you the hope to hold on when things don’t seem to be getting better anytime soon, it makes you want to stay even if everything else is pushing you to leave. Love O love...such an awesome feeling you are!!!!!

**Chapter 5**

***Relationship***

People begin to spend time together, hug, kiss, flirt, keep late night conversations and do everything that those in love do. The feeling of love and affection greatly deepens between people.

Love is confessed on a daily basis and people become other’s reason for smiling. Hands are held in public, random touches and deep, long eye contacts are seem to be the norm. With all these things happening,

a “term” comes to mind; “relationship”. This is a phase where people become emotionally attracted to other people in a strong way. This phase is known as relationship—basically an emotional attraction between people “in love”.

**Stages of relationship**

Relationship is not some rocket science in which everything happens in a flash. It is built over time on some virtues which ensure the longevity of the relationship in the long run. There are several stages of love relationship but there are four most important of all the stages. The first stage, known as the “meeting stage”. Of course, for people to fall in love, they must meet their love partner somewhere; in the school, at work,

at the groceries, at the gym…anywhere. The second stage, known as the “curiosity/ infatuation stage”. People begin to develop feelings for others a little too fast and may judge some things wrongly because they are just too excited about what they feel. It is always advisable to take control of one’s emotion at this stage, as getting anything wrong here may jeopardize one’s chance to experience love. The third stage, known as the “building up stage”. Having successfully accomplished the second stage, things move on to becoming a reality. Trust, confidence and all the good virtues that will sustain the relationship in the long run are all built in this stage. The fourth stage, known as the “commitment/engagement stage”. In this stage, people begin to practicalize what they feel for others…love is vocalized, it is shown, effort, time and attention are invested into the relationship at this stage and continue onward.

**Types of relationship**

Just as love has several types, so also is relationship. In the world we live in today, there are several types of relationships that people engage in for a reason or the other. There are such relationships as:

Monogamous relationships—relationship between just two people.

Polygamous relationships---relationship between more than two people.

Open relationships ---relationship in which the partners agree to have sexual relationships with other people.

Casual sex relationship---a relationship in which the partners may have sexual relationship without necessarily committing to each other.

Friends with benefits relationships—a relationship in which those involved do so just to meet one another’s needs and have someone to depend on in case of bad times.

Asexual relationships—a relationship in which people are not sexually attracted to each other.

**Concepts of relationship**

In a relationship, there are some virtues to expect if such a relationship is going to stand the test of time. There are so many of such virtues but the most important of them all are:

Love—the main reason why the relationship is in existence. It must be nurtured, lest, it’ll fade away into thin air.

Communication—exchange of vital information on anything and everything that concerns the relationship.

Respect—recognizing and honoring the views and opinions of partners.

Trust—having confidence in our partners, without the need to doubt or cross check their words/actions.

Honesty—being truthful in our speech and dealings, without altering any figures.

Humility—being humble and knowing when we’re at fault, and when to apologize.

Forgiveness—being able to pardon our partner when he/she goes wrong, without keeping further grudges in our heart.

Selflessness—being mature and responsible enough to put the needs of our partner before ours.

**Reasons why people enter into relationships**

We all have different reasons why we decide to go into relationships. It is very important to be sure of what one’s expectations are so as not to be taken for a “ride” by our partner. Just as individuals are different, so are their desires. On a general note, people go into relationships for:

Love and care—as humans, there is that innate desire to love and be loved. Of course, one can get such love in a relationship, so why not open up your heart to love??

Companionship and support---keeping one another company and being there in trying times makes a relationship worthwhile. It’s something everyone should desire to experience.

Romance and fun—those random hugs and unexpected kisses are the magical part of a relationship anyone can’t resist, no matter how hard they try.

Sexual and physical satisfaction—though not the most important, it also plays a key role in deepening the bond and attraction between people, keeping the chemistry between them alive and high.

Learning and growing—no one is an embodiment of knowledge; therefore, people can learn a lot when they’re in love, which they may never learn within the four walls of a classroom.

Having children and creating a home—with the right person, one can decide to settle down and start up a family.

**Behaviors that pose a threat to relationships**

It is true that people are different, and with different behavioral makeups but not all behaviors are healthy when in a relationship. Sometimes, people do not realize how much their relationship is suffering

because of their “care-free” attitude. It is therefore important to note these behaviors and figure out how best to deal with them in our respective relationships. Behaviors such as:

Lying

Cheating

Neglect of one’s partner

Taking one’s partner for granted

Comparison attitude

Indifference

Criticism

Excessive anger

Over possessiveness

Jealousy.

Secretiveness

Pride.

Selfishness.

Narcissism

**The “do’s and don’ts” of a relationship**

When in a relationship, certain behaviors are expected of us while others are just not allowed. Recognizing and doing our best to keep to these rules go a long way in preserving our relationships. When in a relationship, you always want to see your partner happy and you can achieve that desire by doing the following:

Spend quality time with your partner

Be there to support when you’re most needed

Cuddle him/her when you’re alone to yourselves

Encourage him/her to actualize a target dream/goal and always follow them up on it.

Always be truthful to your partner

Always reassure your partner of your love.

When you’re with your partner, give him/her your undivided attention

Be romantic with your partner—give them those random hugs and kisses

Surprise them by cooking their favorite meals or getting them a gift

Tell him/her “I love you”

**To enjoy your relationship, never:**

Tell lies to your partner

Compare them to your exes

Flirt with others in their presence

Neglect or take them for granted

Be unfaithful to your partner

Let your anger get the worst of you always

Make them doubt and question their feelings for you.

Pretend to be who you are not.

Make promises you cannot keep.

Hurt them intentionally.

Always push them to the point where they leave angrily, because one of those leaves may be the last.

**Some names used in a relationship**

We find out that once in a relationship, our usual names often get replaced by those sweet, heart-warming names. This is not bad at all as it helps the partners feel more relaxed and comfortable around each other. In a

relationship, you get to be called names like:

Babe

Sweetheart

Love

Baby

Hun

Sweetie

Bae

Stud

Honey bunny

Cuddle bunny

Cupcake

Cutie

Wifey

Hubby

Boo…and a lot more.

**One may like to ask, what defines a healthy relationship????**

The truth is that, no relationship is perfect. Every relationship goes through ups and downs at some point in their existence. Even at that, there are still some factors that makes a relationship good. They are indispensable.

They are often what keeps the lovers together even in the harshest of times. They include:

Unconditional love—love that bears all things, never gives up, waits for the right time, never asks for anything in return.

Effective communication—exchanging information on anything and everything that concerns the relationship.

Trust—absence of doubt or the need to cross check the words of our partner because there is no feeling of secrecy or deception.

Respect—recognition and honor to the views/ opinions of our partners as well as their personality.

Acceptance—no trying to change our partner because we love and cherish them how they are, for who they are.

Support—always available when needed to help and give assistance.

Commitment—being responsible enough to invest our time, energy and effort into the relationship to ensure continuity and longevity.

Honesty—being truthful and plain in speech, saying things as they are without changing any figures.

Sacrifice…being able to compromise, to lay down our needs for the sake of our partner’s happiness.

It feels so nice to be in a relationship…. But be ready to defend it because hard times will always come around no matter how rosy things may seem.

**Chapter 6**

***Breakups***

“I’m so done with this”, “I can’t take this anymore, I’m leaving for good.”, “We’re not just meant to be so let’s end this relationship”, “We’re breaking up and that’s final”.

These sad sayings above are what we often hear when the “vibe” that has kept the relationship finally dies. It is usually a very painful and heartbreaking moment when two people who were once in love part ways. It is a time when people who used to be close suddenly become far apart and strangers to each other. In every relationship, people exhibit several behaviors which affect the lifespan and ultimately, the continuity of such relationship. Feelings get cold, indifference begins to set in, communication drastically declines, times are spent rather apart, priorities change and things are never the same as when the relationship started. All these happen in the last days of a relationship, the last gloomy days of a relationship. A term comes to mind which accurately summarizes all these events, “Breakup”.

As a teenager, I once liked a girl while in high school. I did everything I could to get her attention and ultimately, her love. I spent a lot of time with her, asking her personal questions just to find out what her interests were. We kept on spending time together and getting more comfortable around each other. In one of those times we spent together, I asked her out and she said “yes” outrightly. I was excited and worried at the same…knowing fully well that a girl would usually ask for “some time” to think about the offer which she didn’t ask for. I finally took her response in good fate, justifying it with the fact that she must have liked me that much not to have asked for some to think about what I said. We started dating, things were rosy and we were both happy in the relationship. She didn’t ask for much but I always ensured I had enough just in case she asked anyways. In the quest of trying to always have, I started asking people for money, which was so unlike me. That was a habit I never had but unconsciously developed trying to please a girl and give the impression of a super-rich boy. I always responded anytime she asked for something; I never had a problem with that but the fact that she never asked for my source of money became something to worry about. All through our relationship, I was the one who always called or texted first until one Saturday evening. She called and was sounding rather weird. Of course, I calmed her down to make her relaxed and talk to me. She didn’t say anything quite clear but a sentence she made towards the end of the conversation gave me a huge shock. It goes “There’s something I want to tell you”. Several thoughts came to my head but I had to be calm so I don’t act too forward. After some minutes of beating about the bush, she finally said it. I was so devastated, infuriated and hurt. I knew I apologized anytime I was wrong, even sometimes when it wasn’t my fault. I developed a begging habit just to make her happy, I committed myself to the relationship and in the end, I was heartbroken. It was a very painful experience for me; being the first relationship and also the first heartbreak.

That was my personal experience but there are several other experiences out there, witnessed or being witnessed by other teenagers that may be worse than mine. When a relationship starts, the people involved just want to remain in it without breaking up. For some, the mere thought or mention of the word “breakup” sends shivers down their spines. The event of a breakup can either be “prevented” or “delayed” based on the characters/ attitudes exhibited during the course of a relationship. Some people get into a relationship with great attitudes, only to change during the course of such relationship. There are so many reasons why relationships do not last for long anymore. In a relationship, the event of breakup may be caused by the “actions” or “inactions” of either partners or both. It is also important to note that breakups may also be caused by other factors such as religious differences, cultural differences, differences in business goals and terminal decisions such as marriage choices. Breakups can also be caused by poor conflict management; when the partners have continuous misunderstandings over issues that are rather “mundane” and don’t seem to have any common ground to resolving the issues in their relationship. For some people, they break up due to their family or friend’s view of the relationship; this is sometimes awkward as people in a relationship should be able to make decisions and have their own say about their relationship. For some, they consider breaking up with their partners because their “guts” tell them so. This may not always be wrong because some people actually get into relationships because their guts tell them to go right ahead.

So, what does breakup really feel like???

When people breakup, they no longer feel attracted to each other, the bond that united them in love fades, indifference sets in, communication declines or ends completely, they live their lives without being bothered about the other person’s opinion, they spend more time on other things which they now prioritize over their ended relationship. These are some of the things that happen after a breakup; a whole lot more unfolds when everything comes to an end. Of course, we’re humans and feel pain. However, we react to pain differently. Some people, after a breakup, just want to remain indoor, roll down the curtains, turn on the air conditioner and cry out their pain to their soft pillows; this is often typical with girls. Guys do cry sometimes, though they wouldn’t do it for “all” to see. They may choose to hang out with friends, go to the club, go to a bar and grab some bottles and stuffs. All these are just physical reactions that can be seen, but there’s the unseen part to it, “the emotional pain”, the “heartbreak” itself. It usually has to do with the feelings and their state after a breakup. It is quite painful; there’s no denying the fact that seeing the person you once shared love with walk away from you, never to return, hurts so much. You keep staring at the screen of your phone waiting in vain to see if they’ll call or text. You’re lost in thought, imagining all the times and moments you spent together; they all become memories after a breakup. You look

through your gallery; all the photos you took together while at the mall, in the swimming pool, at the groceries and at the park. You check through your closet and find that special gift you were given on your birthday/ Valentine’s Day. You check through your call logs and see all the entire phone calls and messages you both shared. You just keep seeing a lot of things that you probably wouldn’t have remembered if you were still together. All the times spent together becomes a memory and getting them out of your head is rather tasking and difficult; and that is what makes breakups really painful. It is sad time of reflection for both parties; especially if it was a partner’s fault. Breakup is such a painful experience which carries heartbreak, depression, sadness, regrets (for those who caused it to happen) and pain alongside it.

How can breakup me managed??

Going through the experience of breakup is very painful but one can always seek help when the pain becomes overwhelming, which is the case most times. Managing the situation may not be as easy as the heart is already in disarray but this may probably be the best time to be strong for oneself. One could try:

Talking to a reasonable and trusted adult about it.

Seeking help from a therapist

Exploring new interests so as not to keep thinking about what has happened.

Letting the situation go by not trying to bring it up once more.

Giving oneself some break from continuous worrying

Surrounding oneself with friends and family

Doing what makes one happy; music, going to the movies, hanging out with friends and having fun.

These are some of the things to do in order not to get consumed by the never-ending thought of an ended relationship. While some of the aforementioned ways may help some people manage their feelings, exploring other ways wouldn’t be a bad idea. The most important thing is to know for a fact that breakups are bound to happen; they can only be prevented or delayed, based on the characters exhibited in a relationship. Also, important to note, is that in trying to get over someone or situation, it’s not advisable to keep thinking about the situation as it’ll only help worsen the pain rather than easing it. As a teenager, I’ve been in relationships and I tried to learn as much as possible from my past mistakes so I don’t end up making the same mistake continually. I took note of some behaviors which may seem right but are actually destructive and make breakups happen rather sooner. It is advisable to identify some of the behaviors that accelerate the occurrence of breakups so as to be able to better understand friendship patterns and adequately manage future relationships.

Some toxic behaviors that lead to breakup

While in a relationship, habits are either “dropped” or “picked up”. Either of the actions affect a relationship in a way or the other. To some, they enter into a relationship with good characters but lost is along the way. They may be lucky enough to turn a new leaf and retain their partner. Just as times and chances happen to people, some do not get the second chance to make things right once again. It may be due to their callousness, negligence, indifference and immaturity. Whatever the case may be, it is important to get enlightened on the toxic behaviors that could potentially do some form of harm to our relationships. Some behaviors as:

Pride

Cheating

Lies

Indifference

Negligence

Excessive anger

Narcissism

Over possessiveness

Secretiveness

Abuses; physical, emotional, verbal abuse.

These are just a few of the toxic habits/ behaviors that could potentially harm a relationship and may leave the partners with no other choice than to breakup. These behaviors are known as “the red flags” of a relationship. They should be watched out for and shouldn’t be ignored when noticed because what is “swept under the carpet” in a relationship doesn’t always ends there; as it sometimes goes right ahead to lie in wait, patiently waiting to unveil its ugly head in a whole new level which may disrupt the peace being enjoyed in a relationship. Having identified the behaviors that may lead to a breakup, it’s necessary to get exposed to the various signs they manifest in before a relationship finally comes to a painful end.

Signs that foretell a breakup

People in love aren’t really “blind” as is it always said. While in a relationship, we may want to “turn blind eyes” to some events happening but these underlisted signs shouldn’t be taken for granted as what they foretell may actually come to pass. Before a breakup happens, some things would have been happening which may or may not be taken seriously, until the “last minute” when virtually nothing can be done to salvage the situation. These signs usually confirm that a breakup isn’t far away anymore and some slight actions or inactions at this fragile moment can change everything for worse. Signs like:

Indifference—the love is no longer there. At this point, trying to rekindle the feelings usually proves futile.

Communication decline—the consistency of communication begins to drop a calls or texts may not be exchanged as before, and even when they are made, it may take minutes, hours or days to return/reply which is unusual in a steady relationship

Change in priorities—either partners become second on their respective schedules. They give more attention to personal things than to their partner and always makes excuses for their actions.

Change in attitude—this may manifest in terms of voice tones, morale and physical responses to either partner’s moves, opinions or stand.

Incessant misunderstandings—there are fights and quarrels at the slightest issues, sometimes, even on mundane things.

Negligence—the “I- don’t -care” lifestyle becomes the order of the day. Partners no longer worry or care about the well-being and general lifestyle of each other.

Cheating—external affairs begin to set in. This is indeed something to really watch out for as “once a cheater, always a cheater”.

**Chapter 7**

***General counseling***

Having read through some of the phases of friendship that most teenagers go through, it is important to note some vital lessons from each of them. It is not enough to have the head knowledge alone; applying it to daily life is equally necessary.

Applying what has been learnt from this book will not only enlighten one on the skills, behaviors and habits needed to preserve friendships but also help in managing future relationships. It is advisable to read this portion carefully as it contains some vital information that one may not find out there. The lessons to note have been outlined according to the respective chapters of this book.

**Friendship**

Friendship entails a lot of events, behaviors, habits and experiences that require some skills to be managed. During the course of friendship, one should note that:

Friendship is not a “do or die” affair; if it’s not working out, you should reconsider your staying back.

Friendship should be an association of people of like minds...

Everyone “mustn’t” be your friend,

Being friends with someone should be build you, not break you

You don’t need friends to “complete” you

You should choose your friends, don’t let friends choose you.

Never lose your self-esteem and respect because you want to be accepted by your friends

The fact that your friends are into something doesn’t mean you must do the same, it could be possible that they’re not telling you everything.

A friend that won’t accept you for who you are shouldn’t be considered a friend of yours at all.

**Crush**

Just as discussed earlier in this book, having a crush on someone is as normal and natural as it may sound. A lot of emotions begin to bubble up, follow by usual “butterfly feelings” that come bundled with having a crush on someone. While all of those are great, it is important to bear in mind that:

Having a crush on someone is absolutely normal

One may or may not be able to completely control what they feel at this stage

There may be tendencies to overreact and overdo things

Trying to bottle up emotions may not help that much.

Making decisions by assumption may not be the best option

**Infatuation**

It is important to note the following:

Infatuation and love are two different things

Overdoing things may “jeopardize” one’s chance of experiencing love

There may be tendencies to assume that the feeling is mutual, which is not always the case

Someone may act nicely towards you but it doesn’t mean there’s any feeling attached to their actions.

It better to “express oneself and be rejected” than to “be quiet and miss an opportunity” to experience love.

Though difficult at times, it is important to find a way of letting someone in on how we feel about them.

Never “assume” anything, talk about it.

Having self-control may just be a handy skill as it will help prevent heartaches

Most of what teenagers refer to as love is actually infatuation; “almost-love”

Medically, it has been proven that infatuation only lasts about “four months”; anything below it is true infatuation and anything above it is “love”

If you successfully cross over the infatuation phase, “Happy relationship”!!!!” but if you don’t, enjoy your “single” life and be happy.

**Love**

Love is probably the most beautiful feeling in the entire world. Nevertheless, it won’t be a bad idea to know that:

To be able to love others, love yourself first

True love is hard to find

Love is an emotion that can be felt but can never be bought

Love cannot and should not be forced on anyone.

Love comes naturally, never beg for it.

Love is indeed a great feeling, but for it to last, it must be built upon.

Love accepts fully, with flaws inclusive.

True love never asks for anything in return.

**Relationship**

Everyone wants to be in a happy relationship. It is quite possible but can only be achieved by commitments made by the partners. In general, it’s important to also realize that:

Relationship is great, but should never be “a one-sided affair”.

A healthy relationship would “build” you, not “break” you.

It is important to know one’s “purpose” of going into a relationship, so as not to be taken for granted or a “ride”.

Relationships won’t always be “rosy”—there are also bad times/ moments in every relationship.

For any relationship to last, “both partners must invest equally” into it.

Decisions should be made together, through dialogue, not assumptions.

Never bottle up your feelings---say what’s on your mind but do so without hurting the other person.

Avoid keeping “secrets” from your partner.

If there’s need to talk about any “struggles”, such as jealousy or addiction, don’t hesitate to do so.

“Communication” is key in every relationship; once it declines, so does the relationship.

Never let “pride” destroy your relationship and ruin your happiness.

When in a relationship, stay “fully committed, love, share and respect each other”.

Be the reason for your partner’s “happiness”, not their “doom or tears”.

Enjoy every moment you spend with your partner.

**Breakup**

As sad as it feels, it should be noted that it may just be the option. If we were to be in total control of every situation, breakups would be averted by all means. Sadly, this is not always the case as sometimes, breakups are just inevitable. After it happens, learn to move on with life and take the important lessons from it. A few thoughts should be noted about breakups:

Breakup is the “official end” of a relationship.

It is usually caused by the “actions” or “inactions” of either parties or both.

It is painful but sometimes, it’s just the best option.

After a breakup, learn to “move on” with your life.

Breakups can either be “prevented” or “delayed”, based on characters exhibited in a relationship.

Other factors like “religion, cultural differences and personal reasons” could also be the cause of a breakup.

After a breakup, both parties could still “remain friends” or “part ways” for good.

When going through the pain of a breakup, surround yourself with people who will support and ease some stress off you.

Learn to let the breakup be; avoid bringing it up or worrying about it because it’ll only hurt you the more.

Finally, give yourself some time to heal and be happy once more.